



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Iraq Country Brief June 2020

In Numbers

337,333 people assisted
in June 2020*



0.16 mt of in-kind assistance distributed

USD 3.87 million distributed through
cash-based transfers

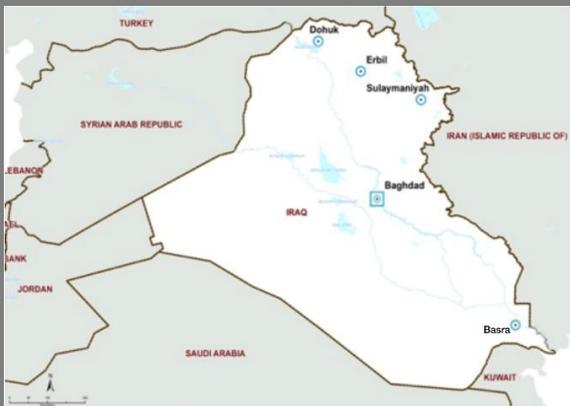
USD 65.4 million six months net funding
requirements (August 2020 – January 2021)

Operational Context

In Iraq, intermittent conflict continues to aggravate the poverty rate and threaten livelihoods. Following the return process that began in 2018, the situation and needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees remain precarious. WFP Iraq's assistance focuses on saving lives and protecting livelihoods – supporting the Government of Iraq's social safety nets towards zero hunger. The challenges of rebuilding infrastructure, providing basic services, promoting social cohesion, creating jobs, developing skills, and progressing towards gender equality whilst maintaining security have impeded the country's efforts to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024 in Iraq has an all-encompassing goal of supporting the Government of Iraq to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shifting WFP's role from implementer to enabler. This is critical in the transitioning from immediate crisis response to greater resilience, and longer-term peace and development. Mainstreaming gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is also key.

The first case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was recorded in Iraq on 24 February. Given the increasing cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and the decision taken by the Iraqi Government to limit gatherings, WFP and its partners are taking additional measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people assisted.



Population: **39 million**
(Ministry of Trade, 2019)

Poverty rate: **22.5%**
(World Bank, 2017)

2019 Human Development Index:
120 of 188 (lowest)

1.38 million IDPs (IOM)
245,421 Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

Operational Update & COVID-19 Response

- In June, WFP delivered cash-based assistance to 267,611 IDPs, and 69,722 refugees, in nine governorates. This included an additional 33,000 refugees and IDPs added as part of WFP's scale-up to meet increased humanitarian needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ready-to-eat food packages of Immediate Response Rations were distributed to a few quarantined households. WFP continues to consider appeals from families via helpdesks in camps, to be included in July's cycle of assistance.
- Curfews are being maintained across the country. Limited working hours in government departments and banks, alongside liquidity issues, continue to cause some delays in WFP's assistance to IDPs and refugees. Other delays were caused by Financial Service Provider (FSP) agents also processing the government's social protection payments ("Minha" grant) through their systems. Meanwhile, incidents involving the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) also continue.
- WFP is in the process of confirming new contracts with its FSPs for cash-based transfers. One is E-gate, which provides cash assistance via virtual pre-paid cards. This is a new delivery mechanism for WFP operations, and also innovatively works even without a smartphone variety of mobile phone. The first E-gate cash transfers are to take place during the July cycle of assistance.
- The Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) continued to distribute assistance to the IDP camp population in the period January – June. WFP's coordination is ongoing, providing smaller, complementary "top-ups" of assistance accordingly. This has resulted in savings of USD 7.6 million over the six-month period.
- WFP Iraq's pioneering new "cashless payments," for people to purchase food using their mobile phones in camp shops, were featured in an Innovation segment at WFP's virtual Executive Board, in late June. So far, the trial is being piloted in Salamiya IDP camp in Ninewa.
- WFP's new accountability to affected populations (AAP) officer is working on awareness-raising measures in camps, to boost understanding of Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs) among beneficiaries, so they can report issues if needed. Tent-to-tent visits are planned (at safe distances).

Photo: In HTC camp in Anbar, a displaced Iraqi woman is able to continue safely purchasing food for her family using WFP's monthly cash assistance. WFP/Photo Library

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Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 1 January 2020–31 December 2024)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
473 m	105 m
Total Requirements for 2020 (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (August 2020 – January 2021)
179 m	65.4 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 1 (SO 1): Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including IDPs and refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year

Focus area: *Crisis Response*

Activities:

- Provide unconditional food assistance to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable food systems (SDG Target 2.4)

Strategic Outcome 2 (SO 2): Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024

Focus area: *Resilience building*

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity strengthening (SDG Target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 3 (SO 3): National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024

Focus area: *Resilience Building*

Activities:

- Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners.
- Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system.
- After being put on hold due to the pandemic, livelihoods / “Food for Assets” activities have begun to gradually resume, with WFP and partners working to take full precautions to protect the health of all people involved, and adhere to the government’s guidelines. The resumption of activities remains subject to approval from the respective local authorities. Building on the Standard Operating Procedures on safe implementation during the pandemic, which were shared last month, WFP developed a step-by-step plan jointly with its cooperating partners, to manage the resumption process from mid-June.
- The EMPACT (“Empowerment in Action”) Digital Skills and English training is planning to recommence via virtual classes online with partners, making use of existing laptops in possession from previous in-person classes, and purchasing others.

- Further to WFP’s adjustment of the resilience/ livelihood programme in response to COVID-19, urban livelihoods projects in Basra, Mosul and Wassit are planned to start as soon as it is safe. These are to provide income and work opportunities for vulnerable populations in affected peri-urban areas. The focus will be on daily wage labourers and seasonal workers who lost their job due to the crisis, to stimulate the local economies in peri-urban areas.
- The School Feeding programme remains suspended until October, but as part of wider capacity strengthening work, WFP is planning to meet with the newly appointed Minister of Education in July, and is continuing to work on the COVID-19 Education response plan with the UN Country Team, in preparation for the next academic year. In addition, WFP is exploring partnerships with the private sector and other UN agencies to offer improved facilities, learning and development opportunities to students.
- The latest innovation in WFP’s partnership with the Ministry of Trade (MoT), to digitalize the Public Distribution System of food rations (PDS), is the Tamwini “My Food Ration” mobile app, to be piloted in July in Baghdad. It will enable families to update and access their information, without visiting the PDS branch offices, which will also help mitigate COVID-19, waiting times, and reduce paper processing.
- WFP air passenger services launched in Iraq on 15 June to support the humanitarian community in flying in and out of Baghdad and Erbil to the Sharjah hub (in the United Arab Emirates), from where passengers can proceed with various WFP or commercial flights. The service continues to be managed from WFP’s HQ, with support from WFP Iraq.

Monitoring and Assessments

- According to WFP’s third round of mobile Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping (mVAM) data, around 4.8 million people (12 percent of the total population) are using negative coping strategies to meet their food needs during the ongoing crisis. On the other hand, the overall functionality of markets is improving. The Market Functionality Index score rose from 6.5 to 7.2, by the third round of data collection.
- In June, 152 monitoring activities were conducted, 47 of which were remote due to the pandemic: these focused on 94 “cash-out” points for IDPs and Syrian refugees, 35 e-voucher activities, 21 shops and two resilience activities. In addition, 69 monitoring interviews were carried out in June.

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP needs an additional USD 65.4 million to ensure that operations can continue without interruption through January 2021.

Donors

WFP would like to thank all donors for their contributions including: Belgium, Canada, ECHO, France, Germany, the government of Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the United States.

N.b. all assistance-related numbers are provisional estimates and may be revised upwards or downwards after reconciliation.